

RHODE ISLAND CONVENTION CENTER AUTHORITY
MEETING OF THE BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS
March 30, 2023

A meeting of the Board of Commissioners of the Rhode Island Convention Center Authority (hereinafter referred to as “Authority” “the CCA” or the “Board” was held on March 30, 2023, pursuant to notice which was posted at the Amica Mutual Pavilion, One LaSalle Square, Providence, RI and the RI Convention Center, One Sabin Street, Providence, RI.

Board members in attendance were George Nee, Dale Venturini, Peter Mancini, Jeff Hirsh, Edward Feldstein, Ernie Almonte, Stephen Iannazzi, Patrick Butler, Tony Mendez and Paul MacDonald.

All current Board members were in attendance.

Others participating were Dana Peltier, Linda Maroun and Melissa Lasko O’Connor, Convention Center Authority; Dan Schwartz, VETS; Alan Chille, PFM/VETS; Larry Lepore, Rebecca Ponder, Veronica VanJura, and Chris Spolidoro, Convention Center and AMP; Kristen Adamo, PWCVB; Bruce Leach, Legal Counsel; Mike Crawley, Citrin Cooperman; Chantale Sarrasin, House Finance and Eileen Smith, Recording Secretary. Executive Director, Daniel McConaghy, was not in attendance due to a family funeral.

Vice Chairman Nee called the meeting to order at 9:05 AM and asked for approval of the minutes of the February Board meeting. Upon a motion made by **Mr. Feldstein** and seconded by **Mr. Butler** it was unanimously

VOTED: To approve the minutes of the February Board meeting.

Ms. Venturini asked Rebecca Ponder to update the Board on workshop portion of the marketing committee dealing with parking. Ms. Ponder reported that the committee had categorized our pluses and minuses and looked for ideas on how we could bounce back from the current state of occupancy. **Ms. Venturini** said that in the past we could be proud of the safety and cleanliness found in the garage which is no longer the case. Chris Spolidoro concurred saying that maintenance has been deferred for two long. Lengthy discussion took place to see if a solution could be found for the declining financial picture of the garage. One of the ideas was to advertise overnight parking. The Mall parking was also considered to be a deterrent to event parking. The Mall is free for a few hours and they have the food court. **Ms. Venturini** stated that more thought needs to be this important issue. Some ideas that were expressed were looking at the train station and providing a shuttle and perhaps advertise a reduced overnight parking rate. Mr. Lepore also stated that he is trying to get Enterprise back

Ms. VanJura reported that A Jurassic World Live Event took place at the Boys and Girls Club where 6 performers taught kids about dinosaur history and distributed tickets for the show. **Mr. MacDonald** thanked Ms. VanJura noting that the organization is near and dear to his heart. He asked if tickets were also given to the parents noting that there are times where the cost to take a

child is prohibitive. Ms. VanJura said that she attempts to present the family with tickets plus a voucher for soda and popcorn.

Mr. Nee asked Ms. Adamo to present the Marketing Report for the PWCVB (attached). Ms. Adamo reported that the CVB has been nominated for a Stella Award as Best CVB in the Northeast. Ms. Adamo reported that a new recommend Rhode Island trade show screen and display posters have been created for the Ambassadors Award Luncheon. Ms. Adamo stated that some the CVB launched some fun, interactive online promotions. Ms. Adamo thanked her staff for their innovative and creative ways to promote the City. She noted that an evite was created for our Visitor Center's upcoming Open House on April 12.

Ms. Adamo stated that the big story is prospective bookings. She said that she can see things getting better. Ms. Adamo noted that we have great success in the nursing industry and we are hosting the Association of Nursing Planners in November.

Mr. Gravison said that he would keep the good news rolling. Mr. Gravison reported that we are entering the graduation season and most Providence schools have booked their time. Mr. Gravison said that things will slow down for the summer but there are some events scheduled that cannot be announced at this time. Mr. Gravison stated that we are receiving great support for the building from performers that are comparing us to other venues. He also stated that doing business with independent promoters has opened new opportunities for the theater.

Mr. Schwartz reported on the financial statements of the VETS. Mr. Schwartz noted that there is a lot of great stuff coming to the Vets. He stated that event income was down because we had one less dance competition than budgeted. Mr. Schwartz noted that the facility will host both rental and at risk performances during the upcoming season. **Mr. Almonte** asked Mr. Schwartz to explain at risk. Mr. Schwartz stated that at risk would be a performer that is looking to play the theater but the financial compensation is negotiated with ticket sales. He stated that each performer is vetted through PPAC as well as Mr. McConaghy before a contract is issued. **Mr. Almonte** said that it is a managed risk. Mr. Schwartz said that the risk is managed. **Mr. Butler** asked if there have been any no's. Mr. Schwartz said there have been. (Financial Statements attached)

Mr. Lepore reported on the financial statements for the Convention Center, AMP and Clifford Street Garage. Mr. Lepore stated that the Convention Center is showing a loss for the period. He said that the biggest driver of that loss is parking which is down approximately \$700,000. **Mr. Nee** asked if we anticipated people not returning to the City during budget preparation. Mr. Lepore reported that some of the business that we anticipated returning such as Hasbro International and CVS Classic have not returned. Mr. Lepore said that some of our niche business such as JLC Live and the Home Show are doing well and Salt Water Fishing seems to grow every year.

Mr. Lepore reported that this might be the best year ever for the arena. Mr. Lepore stated that there are some operational challenges and we should step up security.

Mr. Lepore continued and stated that Clifford Street continues to be a great story. He said that we are better than budget in all categories.

Mr. Lepore took this opportunity to praise Rebecca Ponder who has gone above and beyond expectations in her new position as Director. He stated that Becca has brought a young and optimistic outlook to the facility and has shown that she is capable of guiding us into the future.

Mr. Crawley presented the October Statement of Net Position, Advanced Deposit Funding, Accounts Payable Aging and Accounts Receivable.

Mr. Mancini asked Mr. Lepore if anything can be done regarding labor. Mr. Lepore said that we are struggling to get labor. He said that he reached out to Michael Sabatoni and scheduled a meeting to see how we can best address the issue. Mr. Lepore reported that following the hockey season construction will begin on the roof.

Mr. Nee reported that the Finance Committee had forwarded a recommendation to enter into a contract with ZDS for the construction work to renovate the 5th level of the Convention Center which is long overdue. Upon a motion duly made by **Ms. Venturini** and seconded by **Mr. Butler** it was unanimously

VOTED: to enter into agreement with ZDS/Populous to renovate the fifth level of the Convention Center.

Mr. Nee asked for a motion to convene an Executive Session to discuss a personnel matter to according to R.I. General Laws 42-46-5(a)(1) as to a discussion

- Employment Agreement between The Rhode Island Convention Center Authority and Daniel P. McConaghy

A motion was made by **Mr. Butler** seconded by **Mr. Mancini** and by a roll call vote Executive Session according to R.I. General Laws 42-46-5(a)(1) convened at 10:30 AM. Mr. Leach reported that the Transparency Act requires that the vote for approval or denial should take place in open session.

Vote:

Patrick Butler – yes

Jeffrey Hirsh – yes

Paul MacDonald, yes

Peter Mancini – yes

Tony Mendez – yes

Dale Venturini - yes

George Nee – yes

Mr. Almonte and Mr. Iannazzi did not participate

Discussion ensued regarding Mr. McConaghy's accomplishments and contributions to the success of the Complex. It was noted the exceptional work that took place during the pandemic and the coordinating with the State for hospital usage and the National Guard. Mr. McConaghy was the perfect person to step in following the death of Jim McCarvill. Further discussion took place regarding Mr. McConaghy's qualifications and his willingness to keep the momentum going.

Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Mancini** it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn Executive Session and reconvene in Regular Session at 10:35 AM

Mr. Nee reported that no votes were taken in Executive Session. **Mr. Butler** asked for a vote to seal the minutes of Executive Session.

Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Mancini** it was unanimously

VOTED: to seal the minutes of Executive Session.

The Board reconvened in open session at 10:40 AM. **Mr. Nee** said that after lengthy discussion he would like a motion to extend Daniel McConaghy's employment contract. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Hirsh** and seconded by **Mr. Feldstein** it was unanimously

VOTED: to renew Mr. McConaghy's contract for a three year period.

Mr. Nee asked if there was any new business. Hearing none he asked for a motion to adjourn. Upon a motion duly made by **Mr. Butler** and seconded by **Mr. Hirsh** it was unanimously

VOTED: to adjourn at 10:50 AM